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ABSTRACT

This model, a preliminary overview, suggests that learning library skills be integrated into bilingual bicultural programs, as limited English speaking ability (LESA) students need information skills to cope with a world in which current information is essential. Integrated library skills instruction, in which collaboration between teachers and librarians is necessary, is defined as two sets of general curricular and library skills objectives, activities, and assessments merged into a unified curriculum. Support for this instruction lies in the hypothesis that classroom teachers have a dominant role in influencing a student's library use or non-use, that library skills are taught most effectively when instruction is integrated into the actual curriculum, and that library skills should be taught as basic thinking and learning skills that provide a means for attaining other learning objectives and not as ends in themselves. General suggestions for implementation of such a program are given, and a table of steps for this process is appended. (MHP)

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INTEGRATING LIBRARY SKILLS INTRUCTION INTO THE BILINGUAL BICULTURAL CLASSROOMS OR PREVENTING LESA FUTURE SHOCK

by Aurelio Manuel Montemayor
and Garry Stillman
Intercultural Development Research Association

Did you know that you can borrow prints by Picasso, Rivera, and early Mayan artists free of charge?

If you're opening up a small business, what information sources would you use?

How does one learn to read a map or use a gazeteer?

What's a hotline? Is there one for mental health services?

How would you find the sports section in the Sunday edition of the New York Times without going page by page?

These examples, ranging from the mundane to the esoteric, reflect skills essential for anyone in coping with a world in which information is currency.

The limited English speaking ability (LESA) student needs such currency for social and economic survival. This survival necessitates not only the obvious literacy and quantitative skills, but also an ability to understand and cope easily with the social, physical and information environments which every student will face in daily life.

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Bilingual bicultural education, at its best, is the most effective combination of pedagogical strategies to help provide skills to LESA students in the contemporary society. When properly and successfully implemented, bilingual education integrates the learning of content areas with the language and culture of the LESA students, while at the same time developing the acquisition of the basic survival skills. Likewise, library skills instruction, when most effective, can give the LESA student autonomy, independence, and a much better chance of surviving in the world of future shock.

In short library skills instruction enables the students to develop competencies in dealing with the world of available information and using information for problem solving in daily life. Such instruction, when effectively integrated into the bilingual bicultural

instructional program, can then play a significant role in the education of the LESA student.

Library Skills Meeting LESA Needs

But how can library skills instruction effectively meet the needs of the LESA student and also fit into the bilingual bicultural program?

The all too familiar alternative of "library orientation" exemplified by the periodic library tour and the lecture on how-to-check-out a book, should not be confused with genuine library skills instruction. Nor is the alternative of course-related but separately designed and taught instruction sufficient to meet the needs of LESA students (although obviously an improvement on the "library orientation" option).

Much more desirable is the alternative of integrated library skills instruction which Walker and Montgomery, in Teaching Media Skills (1977), have identified as instruction in which the two sets of general curricular and library skills objectives, activities, and assessments are merged into a single unified curriculum.

So in practice, only if library skills instruction is integrated into the total curricular and instructional effort of the bilingual program will it meet the needs of LESA students and develop their abilities to cope with the diverse information systems of academic and daily life.

At this point the teacher might reasonably ask, "With all my other subjects and classroom responsibilities, must I now teach library skills as well?"

A review of the literature of library skills instruction reveals three themes which support the feasibility of this type of instruction: (1) that the classroom teacher has the dominant role of influencing a student's library use or non-use, (2) that library skills are taught most effectively when instruction is integrated into the actual curriculum, and (3) perhaps most significantly, that library skills should be taught as basic thinking and learning skills providing a means for attaining other learning objectives and not as ends in themselves.

As the latter two points imply, integrated library instruction, like bilingual education, can be a means of enhancing and supporting the content areas. Such classroom-oriented instruction reinforces the learning of each content area with the added benefit that the library or media center and ultimately other information systems become more accessible and usable.

In sum, an integrated model of library skills instruction merges the three elements of content area, bilingual bicultural aspects, and library skills to produce a unified multiple objective curriculum. (see Figure 1 below)

Integrating Library Skills Instruction

Though conditions and situations obviously vary widely from school system to school system, the general suggestions presented below will provide insight into implementing an integrated model of library skills instruction.

1. The most important requirement for effective implementation is that the instructional program be flexible to the needs of individual children and the varying elements in the community and compatible with the culture of the LESA student.
2. Second, the effective implementation of such a model requires cooperation and joint planning between bilingual program staff and the library staff to achieve integration of their respective objectives and activities. The lack of such joint planning as well as communication and cooperation has often prevented the full implementation of such a program.
3. A third basic requirement for implementation is a scope and sequence of library skills and a scope and sequence for the bilingual content areas. Each scope and sequence should (a) be developmental and continuous, presenting a sequence of skill objectives for K through the appropriate grades, (b) provide for introduction, application, and reinforcement of the skills, and (c) expect performance which is observable.

All three are important preconditions for effective implementation of the suggested program. Nevertheless, there is a realistic order of priorities. For example, if there is little or no information on scope and sequence, the collaboration of library and bilingual program staff members could result in an effective temporary program until the proper curriculum guides are designed or adapted from existing information. Yet, neither the scope and sequence nor the collaboration of staff members could produce an instructional program compatible with the student needs if those needs aren't adequately known.

Steps in the Process of Implementation

The description presented below is keyed to the schema in Figure 2. The following set of steps represents one workable process for implementation and is shown in outline for reasons of space.

Step I. The assessment of needs is not only an initial activity but rather an ongoing process that forms the basis for the other activities.

Step II. A scope and sequence provides the means to transform the needs of the student into a consistent and continuous series of objectives that give focus and measurability.

Step III. The next step is identification, analysis and comparison of specific objectives that can be met concurrently through classroom activities. It is crucial that the teacher and librarian collaborate in this step.

Step IV. Next, collaboration by teacher and librarian should result in development of a combined objective.

Step V. The design and conduct of activities follows. All activities must creatively and flexibly help the learner achieve those skills described in the combined objective.

Step IV. A final consideration is post-assessment. For post-assessment to be successful, it is necessary that the objectives be written to elicit observable behavior in the student.

For a more detailed discussion of the implementation of an integrated model, a good source is Walker and Montgomery's Teaching Media Skills.

And in Conclusion . . .

This article is a preliminary overview of a model for integrating library skills with a bilingual bicultural program, a model which merges the content area, bilingual bicultural aspects, and library skills. Much remains to be done. As this article is the product of collaboration between a bilingual teacher and an information specialist, likewise collaboration between teacher and librarian is essential for the effective implementation of this model.

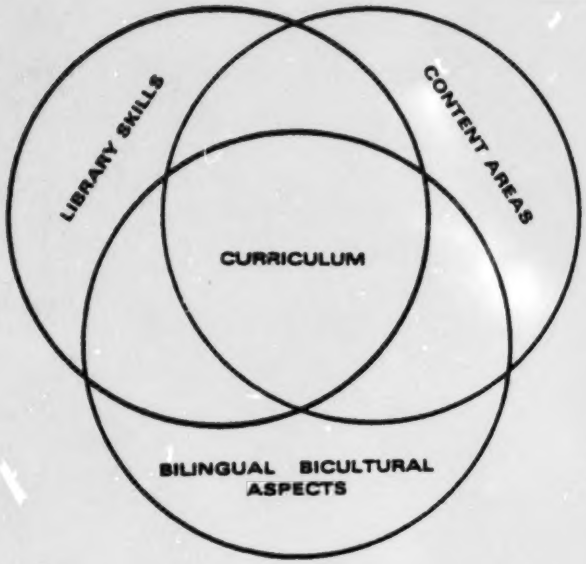
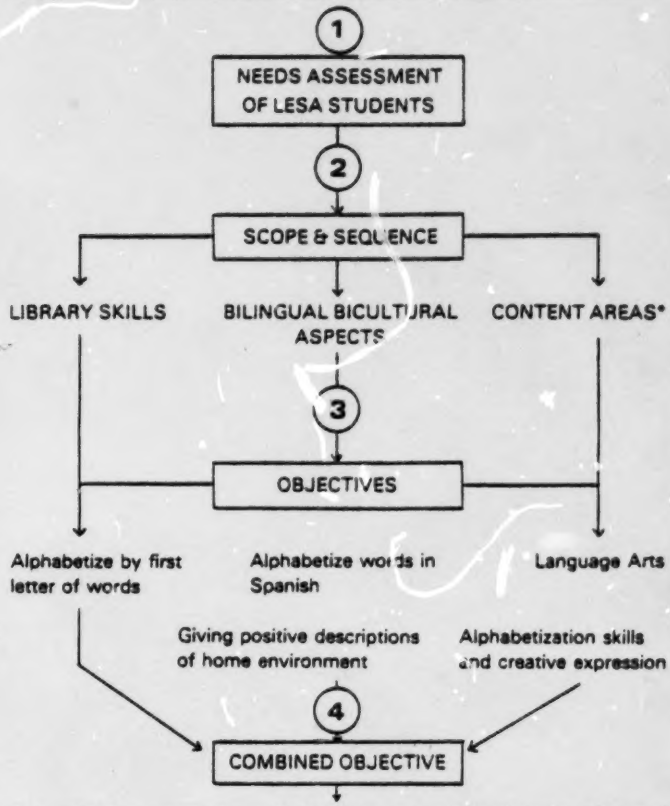
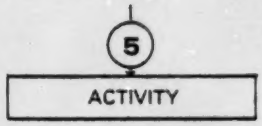


Fig. 1 A Model for the Integration of Library Skills Instruction with the Bilingual Bicultural Program.



At the "Alphabet Soup" Learning Center, the student will alphabetize words in Spanish and English and describe positive characteristics about his/her home environment by performing 3 out of 5 activities and presenting the products during show-and-tell.



Using the Spanish story card title bag, the student will place the titles in alphabetized order and record the order on a task from. He/she will choose the three favorite stories and locate them on the shelves. He/she will also write words and phrases beginning with the same letters that give positive descriptions of his/her barrio. He/she will cut and paste the letters from the "goodies bag" and print the rest of the words on construction paper and present them during show-and-tell.

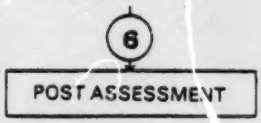


Fig. 2 Steps in the Implementation of the Model

* The categories of "bilingual bicultural aspects" and "content areas" are listed separately because school systems often treat them separately.